

Public Health Committee Hearing

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

SB 918 'An Act Concerning the Provision of Services to Individuals with Intellectual Disability,"

My name is Dawn DeMatteo. I am currently on the Steering Committee of Our Families Can't Wait and fully support Bill SB 918, "***An Act Concerning the Provision of Services to Individuals with Intellectual Disability***". As a single parent of a 22 year old (Anthony) who is both mentally and physically challenged, I am deeply disturbed by the constant cuts to DDS. Anthony requires 24/7 care and is unable to perform any activities of daily living without assistance. He is non-vocal, wears diapers, and requires full hands on assistance with all aspects of life. Additionally, he cannot be left alone and has no regard for safety. My days are spent trying to hold down a full-time job while providing care for him and his 13 year old Brother. Additionally, my 13 year old son (Michael) is my back-up for Anthony.

Anthony has been on the waiting list for numerous years as a Priority 1 with a 'level of needs' of 7 (8 being the highest). **Prior** to the most recent budget release and dramatic cuts to DDS, residential placement has been put on hold for Anthony (and others on the waiting list) until the death of their caregiver.

The **current** release of the Governor Malloy's budget and cuts to DDS will cause individuals with development disabilities and their families to suffer even more dramatically. It's disappointing that Governor Malloy's budget did not include a plan to address the funding crisis of DDS but instead will create additional harm to families on several levels. Regulations need to be put in place to avoid the weakening of a population who are already fragile. Bill SB918 will help to mandate and protect individuals with I/DD.

These individuals deserve protection as they are unable to protect themselves. In a society in which 'bullying' is on the forefront, these continuing cuts to the same group of vulnerable individuals, could equate to a form of 'bullying'.

Dawn DeMatteo (Mother of Anthony DelMoro)

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"We are extremely disappointed that Governor Malloy's budget address didn't include a plan to address the funding crisis of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). If implemented, the governor's budget would make the DDS funding crisis worse, causing great harm to our loved ones with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and families across the state."

As his sole caregiver, I am faced with making all the decisions relative to his life; however, the most important decision for any parent with a child that has intellectually and/or a physical disability is out of my control. I'm speaking of the appropriate living environment outside of his home. Due to constant budget cuts to DDS, this decision is deferred until the situation becomes an emergency ~ most likely the death of a parent/caregiver. How can this be Moral?